

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-15 AID-20 SIL-01 LAB-06 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7217

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, PE, CI, US

SUBJ: VELASCO COMPARES SITUATIONS IN PERU AND CHILE

SUMMARY: DURING HIS PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY, PRESIDENT VELASCO WAS ASKED ABOUT ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW. HIS ANSWERS ABOUT CHILE WERE CAUTIOUS BUT HE STRESSED THAT SUCH EVENTS COULD NOT TAKE PLACE IN PERU AND IF THEY DID, THE INSTIGATORS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO SUFFER. ASKED WHETHER HE THOUGHT CIA HAD A ROLE IN ALLENDE'S OVERTHROW, VELASCO TREATED THE MATTER AS A FORBIDDEN SUBJECT. FURTHER QUESTIONED WHETHER CIA INTERVENTION WAS POSSIBLE IN PERU, VELASCO COMMENTED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS AWAKE TO ANY THREAT. THE CIA PORTION OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS NOT PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT PUT OUT BY THE PRESIDENCY BUT WAS REPORTED IN LA PRENSA. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT, VELASCO WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON ALLENDE'S DEATH. HE ANSWERED THAT AMERICA HAS LOST A REVOLUTIONARY AND COURAGIOUS POLITICIAN WHO THOUGHT OF HIS PEOPLE
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AND HAD IDEALS. VELASCO ADDED, BUT THIS WAS NOT

REPORTED BY LIMA'S PRESS, THAT HE AND ALLENDE HAD OFTEN TALKED TOGETHER. THIS LATTER COMMENT WAS PRESUMABLY DELETED BECAUSE IT UNDERLINED VELASCO'S CLOSE PERSONAL TIES WITH ALLENDE.

2. COMMENTING ON LABOR TROUBLES IN CHILE AND ARGENTINA, OFFICIAL VERSION REPORTS THAT VELASCO SAID: "IN PERU, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO LOOK TO THE OUTSIDE. THEY THINK THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING THERE CAN HAPPEN IN PERU. THEY ARE WRONG. THE CHILEAN CASE IS DIFFERENT FROM PERU'S. A LIKE PHENOMENON WILL NOT TAKE PLACE HERE. IF IT DID, THOSE THAT DREAM ABOUT IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TO PAY THE PRICE. THEY WOULD GET CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE AND LET THEM FEEL THE BULLETS. THEY WOULD DESERVE IT. THERE IS A GREAT DIFFERENCE IN THE SITUATIONS IN BOTH COUNTRIES. THEY ARE DIFFERENT PROBLEMS."

3. LA PRENSA REPORTS (ACCURATELY BECAUSE EMBOFFS LISTENED TO PRESS CONFERENCE TAPE) THAT VELASCO WAS ASKED WHETHER CIA HAD INTERVENED IN CHILE THROUGH THE USE OF AGENTS DISGUISED AS TOURISTS. VELASCO REPLIED, "FORBIDDEN. I CANNOT SAY ANYTHING. I CAN THINK OF MANY THINGS BUT I CANNOT, I SHOULD NOT. THEY ARE DELICATE QUESTIONS AFFECTING MANY COUNTRIES." QUESTIONED WHETHER A SIMILAR SITUATION COULD TAKE PLACE IN PERU, VELASCO SAID (AS REPORTED IN LA PRENSA): "WELL...IF WE LOWER OUR GUARD (DI NOS DEJAMOS), ANYTHING CAN TAKE PLACE HERE. BUT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT BECAUSE WE PRETEND WE ARE SLEEPING HERE BUT WE DO NOT SLEEP WITH BOTH EYES SHUT. WE HAVE ONE EYE OPEN HERE."
BELCHER

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